



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Meeting the challenge

Story by Stephen Sellers and Steve Polston

Hikers explore ongoing prairie restoration at Prophetstown State Park during a conference to explore the natural and cultural resources of Indiana's newest state park, on Sept. 16, 2000.

Seventeen nations gathered in 1808 on the banks of the Wabash River at a point about midway between Gary and Indianapolis.

The village they established at the site became known as Prophetstown. The people who lived there would soon fall victim to the ultimate clash between different civilizations and cultures.

One hundred ninety-three years later, progress continues on the development of a new state park on the site of that native village. Also named Prophetstown, the park and a privately developed museum will honor the people who gathered there.

Prophetstown State Park and the new Indiana State Museum (under construction in Indianapolis) are among the most visible examples of significant efforts Hoosiers are making on behalf of their natural and cultural heritage.

The museum and a portion of the park are scheduled to open next year. They will be the newest jewels in a system of state parks, reservoirs, forests, fish and wildlife areas and historic sites that host some 17 million visitors each year.

Hoosiers love their recreational and cultural facilities, and heavy use over the years has had a predictable effect on the infrastructure of some of our finest properties. To address a growing need, Gov. Frank O'Bannon requested and the Indiana General Assembly appropriated \$172 million during the past four years to help the Department of Natural Resources improve, repair and replace facilities at state parks and other DNR-managed recreational and cultural facilities.

That funding along with some modest fee increases this year for park visitors and campers is financing state park inn rehabilitation, new campground electrical systems, renovations of historic sites, new water and wastewater treatment systems and upgrades to hiking trails.

There are many other examples of Hoosiers working to protect and improve the state's natural resources.

For hours on an unseasonably chilly October afternoon, Gary Hudson, chief of the state's fish hatcheries, stood ankle deep in the White River below a beautifully restored wooden bridge near Noblesville, Ind. The DNR with the help of its partner, White River Rescue 2000, was restocking the river following a highly publicized fish kill.

Hundreds of parents and children joined in to carry buckets full of smallmouth bass and channel catfish from hatchery transport trucks down to Gary at the water's edge until thousands of fish had been stocked in the river.

In Steuben County, DNR dam and levee safety

specialists George Crosby and Dale Baker helped save Hamilton Lake dam, which was near failure after a torrential rainstorm. Working through the weekend, they mobilized construction equipment and the workers who helped save the dam and the lives and property of people downstream.

Stewart Turner, a former district forester from Upland, Ind., joined a DNR fire crew in July to battle a wildfire that had already consumed 22,000 acres of Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. On the fire line, Stewart worked alongside his daughter, Patty Turner of Utah.

On a Sunday morning, oil and gas inspector Dan Veach was the first official on the scene of an oil spill in Vanderburg County. Dan coordinated containment and clean-up activities to prevent up to 50 barrels of oil from entering an Ohio River tributary and threatening fish and wildlife.

Beginning well before dawn, entomologist Gayle Jansen moved from location to location in Decatur, Ind. directing flight patterns of pilots who were dropping tiny pieces of plastic onto treetops below. The miniscule flakes are designed to wipe out an infestation of tree-destruction

ing gypsy moths by tricking the forest pests into not mating.

It was one of more than a dozen treatments she would coordinate during 2000, following a dozen evening meetings around the state to inform the public of options available to combat the invasive species.

Then there was Conservation Officer Jeff Milner, a member of DNR's K9 Resource Protection Team, and his Labrador retriever, Journey. Beginning at 4:15 a.m. one Sunday, Journey tracked a suspect through the woods and two creeks in Dubois County. When Milner and Journey emerged from the briars and brambles, the conservation officer was exhausted and scratched from head to toe. Officer Milner and Journey found their suspect in a similar condition—and ready to surrender.

For every DNR employee and our partners, there are countless stories of work Hoosiers are doing to protect and enjoy their natural and cultural heritage. Some stories are more dramatic and more interesting than others. But each is important.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Indiana's state forestry division and the 85th year of our first state park. Much has been accomplished and there is much more work to do.

Look for more information about the DNR in the pages of *Outdoor Indiana* and in our annual report, which is posted on the Internet (www.state.in.us/dnr/annual).



Land for recreation and wildlife



As Indiana's population continues to grow, more land is being developed for homes and places of business. More Hoosiers means more people are flocking to existing outdoor recreation areas; and increased residential and business construction can reduce wildlife habitat.

That's why it is so important to set aside natural areas for recreation and wildlife. It also is the primary reason that 560,000 Hoosier motorists have purchased environmental license plates during the past eight years.

More than 26,000 acres have been preserved for recreation and wildlife, thanks in large part to the \$14 million generated by sales of the plate.

Additional funding from two governors—Frank O'Bannon and Evan Bayh—and the Indiana General Assembly provided an additional \$17 million for the Indiana Heritage Trust. Our partners—primarily conservation organizations and local government—have provided \$40 million to help set aside land for parks, forests, trails, nature preserves and wildlife areas.

Look for more information about the Indiana Heritage Trust and the 29 projects completed in 2000 by visiting the DNR on the Internet (www.state.in.us/dnr).

The Indiana Heritage Trust is the state's permanent program to protect land for recreation and wildlife, but it isn't the only initiative. During the past four years, nearly 20,000 acres have been added for management as fish and wildlife areas. Hunters and anglers, appropriations from the state legislature and the Heritage Trust have contributed to these land protection efforts.

Tippecanoe County residents are seeing increased activity at Prophetstown State Park, with habitat restoration, the development of a campground and other facilities and completion of the early 20th century Hoosier farm by Museums of Prophetstown.

Sixty percent of the land for the 2,700-acre park has been acquired. A campground and other recreational facilities are scheduled to open next year. Prophetstown is Indiana's 23rd state park.

Protecting Indiana's natural resources



The DNR protects streams, fish, wildlife and humans through regulation of mineral production and water resources.

We've worked with more than 37,000 Hoosier land users during the past four years to install erosion control measures that prevented 1 million tons of soil from clogging Indiana rivers and lakes.

We fund more than 100 projects annually totaling \$800,000 to help communities prevent soil and

nutrients from entering lakes and streams.

Preserving the environment is important to Hoosiers, who frequently must pay for past abuses of the land. Our oil and gas division and reclamation division help landowners, miners and community action groups repair damage.

We've spent more than \$21 million in the past four years to clean up abandoned coal mines and illegal mining practices. With our partners, we repaired the environmental damage from 89 oil and gas wells that had been abandoned by their owners years ago.

Millions of trees grown at our tree nurseries are planted every year on reclaimed mine land, which also prevents erosion. Just as important are the thousands of acres of wildlife habitat and recreation areas created with our plantings, planning, advice and technical assistance.

Indiana's new forest legacy program assures that 2,000 acres of strategic forestland will be protected from development because it will forever be preserved as private forests.

Commitment to Serve



Firefighters from dozens of Indiana communities and DNR field staff assist in major wildfires

throughout the country. Last year, more than 120 Hoosiers worked to save lives, property and habitat in Mesa Verde, Colorado and Bitterroot National Forest in southwest Montana.

More than half the firefighters shared by Indiana are DNR employees, who rank among the most senior and well-trained firefighters in the nation, such as fire control coordinator Steve Creech and former DNR safety director Phil Wagner, now an assistant state forester. They are called on to direct teams throughout the nation when these disasters strike.

Then there are special people like Angela and Roger Goldman of Fort Wayne. A married couple, both Angela and Roger serve the state as conservation officers.

Improving DNR's recreational facilities



Indiana is making the biggest investments ever in improvements in its state parks and other DNR-managed recreational and cultural facilities. During the past four years, Gov. O'Bannon and the General Assembly have provided the DNR almost as much money for facility improvements as was available during the previous 16 years.

Guest rooms at Clifty Inn in Madison, Ind. have been remodeled, and they are now connected to the main building and there is a new, indoor swimming pool. Improvements to Spring Mill Inn, Abe Martin Lodge and Canyon Inn also are scheduled.

The Lieber State Recreation Area aquatic center opened in 2000 featuring a zero depth entry swimming pool, volleyball courts and a play area for children. Major renovations are in the works to the pools at Turkey Run and Clifty Falls state parks.

A new nature center is being constructed at Mounds

State Park, a visitor center will open this year at Charleston State Park and an addition to the Salamonie Reservoir nature center is underway. Fort Harrison State Park receives new shelters, restrooms and a family camping area.

A new shooting range has been constructed at Kingsbury Fish and Wildlife Area. The range is equipped with concrete baffles for the very best protection of public safety.

General repairs are being made at Indiana's 16 state historic sites, with several receiving major structural repairs including the newly acquired state office building at the Corydon Capital, Culbertson Mansion, New Harmony, Levi Coffin House and Whitewater Canal. Also, the Lanier Mansion State Historic Site receives a new visitor center, with some important help from private donations.

Combating invasives



Gypsy moths, pineshoot beetles, zebra mussels, purple loosestrife. They're examples of what we call invasive species—imported plants and animals that run amok because there are no natural predators.

The gypsy moth is one of North America's most

devastating forest pests—destroying trees in neighborhoods, parks and forests by eating the foliage and weakening the systems of trees. Native to Europe and Asia, gypsy moths were accidentally introduced near Boston more than 130 years ago. Twenty years later, the federal government began attempts to eradicate the gypsy moth. The eradication efforts continue, most often using a bacterium commonly found in soil.

Two years ago, the DNR directed an airplane to drop some tiny, plastic flakes into the treetops in an

infested area at the Indiana Dunes. The flakes, coated with the pheromone or scent of the female, confused the males and made it impossible for them to locate the females during mating season.

The treatment was so successful that there were virtually no gypsy moths found in and around the treatment area just one year later. Building on success, 10 separate infestations were treated in 2000 with the tricky plastic particles.

A plant pest—the beautiful purple loosestrife found in many landscape gardens—also has caused concern in Indiana. The wetland plant came from Europe and drives out native plants that can most efficiently filter wetlands of runoff.

We are beginning to have excellent success combating loosestrife with two small leaf eating beetles, *Galerucella californiensis* and *G. pusilla*.

The insect larvae reduce purple loosestrife leaves to skeletons and the adult beetles continue to eat even more leaves as they lay eggs on the loosestrife. The beetles aren't harmful to other plants.

Without competition from purple loosestrife, native plants, and the wildlife that depend on them, can recover. Released at 40 sites around Indiana, it is hoped *Galerucella* will spread to all wetlands where purple loosestrife has spread.

Education and action



Hoosier students, teachers and ordinary citizens are learning to understand and care for the environment with some important help from the DNR.

In Tippecanoe County, Battle Ground Elementary students go to Burnett's Creek, within walking distance of their school, to study what plants and animals are found there.

Then they share their information with Wickham Market Primary School, in Suffolk, UK, and Tammola Primary School, in Heinola, Finland.

Virginia Smith said her students study a poster in their classroom about small stream ecosystems, which she picked up at a DNR seminar for educators. Smith has integrated training from Project Wild, Project Wet, Project Learning Tree and GoFishIN into many classroom activities.

Environmental education is the main priority of the DNR's education center at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis. The center coordinates workshops for teachers, for the Hoosier Riverwatch program and for curricula in schools that teach about wildlife, forests, aquatic resources and fishing.

More than 200,000 people have been taught by teachers who visited the resource center and more than 50,000 have visited us at school resource fairs and the annual Earth Day celebration in Indianapolis.

Preserving our heritage



We learn more about ourselves when we learn about, preserve and honor our heritage.

Next year, the new state museum will open and celebrate Hoosier heritage at a world-class facility in White River State Park amid a matrix of cultural, sports and educational institutions serving millions of visitors a year.

The \$80 million museum will explore life in Indiana from the ancient seas that enveloped our state to the giant mammals that roamed the countryside to the people who settled here following the retreat of a glacier more than 10,000 years ago. The

museum also will explore 19th and 20th century life in Indiana and invite visitors to speculate about our future.

Last year, the DNR helped identify and preserve an 18th century agribusiness machine—a haypress—at Leavenworth along the Ohio River. The machine produced giant bales of hay, which then were used in the region or shipped on the river. The haypress will be reconstructed at Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area, where a nature center and pioneer village already interpret the area's important culture and history.

The DNR has provided staff support and funding to help the Indiana Freedom Trails—a major initiative to discover and document Hoosiers' involvement with the Underground Railroad that aided escaped slaves in the 19th century.

Also, the DNR is establishing a comprehensive database to document cemeteries and pioneer burial plots. The database, which will be established with the help of hundreds of volunteers, will assist communities in their efforts to honor and protect the final resting places of our ancestors.

Working with environmental partners



More than 30 years ago, the first official Earth Day drew attention to America's environmental challenges.

Since that time, new laws and regulations have improved the quality of the air we breathe and water we drink. And private citizens have been devoting their own time, energy and intellect to make a difference.

For example, the DNR's Adopt-a-River program includes people from civic groups, schools, colleges

along with anglers, wildlife watchers and others who clean up at least a mile stream segment twice a year for at least two years.

More than 30 groups have adopted rivers and streams such as Clear Creek in Bloomington, the Kankakee River near LaSalle, Sugar Creek near Crawfordsville and the Eel River near Worthington.

Also, 165 groups are monitoring water quality in Indiana streams, posting data on the DNR's Hoosier Riverwatch Internet database. Go to www.HoosierRiverwatch.com for information about streams in your area.

Years ago, oil and gas producers weren't required to contain the saltwater that was separated from the petroleum they extracted from the earth. Today, many of the saltwater or brine deposits remain in southwest Indiana, scarring the landscape.

The Indiana Brine Coalition, a small citizen group, is working with government and industry to clean up these barren areas that are virtually devoid of plant life. The coalition contains the brine deposits, prevents further erosion and turns the sites into life-sustaining ecosystems.

Meeting the challenge



When it comes to challenges, here's a good one. What do you do with a river that doesn't have many fish due to a polluter? Five seemingly average citizens with some not-so-average ideas thought they could help by raising some money to buy fish for the river.

White River Rescue 2000 formed as a not-for-profit organization a year ago and started selling T-shirts and duck decoys to help fund restocking the White River. They ended up raising \$130,000 from companies and regular folks to purchase fish from private hatcheries.

At the same time, DNR fisheries biologists were surveying the river, developing restocking plans and raising more than a quarter of a million fingerlings in state hatcheries for the White River restocking effort.

The DNR biologists somehow managed to focus considerable attention on the White River while completing all of their major planned work assignments for the year, including raising more than 20 million fish for stocking in Hoosier waters.

With the help of White River Rescue 2000 and thousands of citizens who donated to the cause, the DNR stocked the river last year with 540,598 bass, bluegills, crappies and catfish. The partnership between the DNR and local organizations continues to grow this year with additional fish stocking and a coordinated campaign promoting catch and release fishing on the White River.

DNR Directory

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